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L E T T E R
F R O M

AN AMERICAN,

Now resident in LONDON,

TO A
MEMBER of PARLIAMENT,

ON THE

Subject of the Restraining PROCLAMATION;

AND CONTAINING

S T R I C T U R E S

ON

LORD SHEFFIELD'S Pamphlet on the COMMERCE
of the AMERICAN STATES.

SECOND EDITION.

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AN AMERICAN

MEMORIAL

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S I R,

TH E secession of so considerable a part of the British Empire, as now constitutes the United States, and the general acknowledgment of their independance by the powers of Europe, must point out a very important æra in the history of mankind.

The causes that led to this great revolution, and the operations that insured its success, will hereafter afford abundant matter for the pen of some able historian.

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The immediate effects that it must have on the System of European Politics, form a very serious subject of present enquiry and contemplation; especially, as nations begin to be convinced of the futility of becoming great by conquest, and more inclined to abandon the cruel system of war, in order effectually to enrich themselves by pursuing the peaceful line of commerce.

The United States, stretching through such a variety of climates, abounding in such various productions, and affording such a vast field for the consumption of European manufactures, must naturally have a very intimate and active commerce with the different States of Europe.

From adventitious circumstances, peculiarly favorable to Great Britain, no nation

tion possesses opportunities of so effectually promoting this connection; and from her dependence on commerce, for the support of her power and importance, no nation is so pointedly interested in the improvement of these advantages.

She has already brought her affairs to the brink of ruin, from continuing too long a slave to imposture and delusion. It is time to recover her from her lethargy; this perhaps may prove a difficult task, as ignorant and interested writers are still endeavouring to impose their ill-digested and pernicious systems on the public mind, and to impress sentiments, which, if adopted into the politics of this country, would be entirely subversive of a commercial connection betwixt Great Britain and the United States of America.

I shall submit my opinions on this subject, to your consideration, and have little doubt of a coincidence of sentiment.

You must remember that after the conclusion of the war, a Bill was introduced into the House of Commons, by Mr. Pitt, (then Chancellor of the Exchequer) in order to serve as a temporary regulation for the trade of the United States. In perfect conformity with the spirit of this Bill, it was expected a permanent connection betwixt the two Countries, would be formed by treaty; it had in view a system of liberal intercourse, and was received in America with universal approbation, as the harbinger of returning affections.

Under a firm persuasion that Great Britain would persevere in the line of conduct,

duct, that this Bill prescribed, the United States opened all their ports to British shipping, and received them, without any other restrictions than those, which vessels belonging to their own citizens, were exposed to.

A change of ministry soon after took place, and likewise a change of measures; the advocates for the American war composed a part of it; the effects were soon visible; a Proclamation, virtually restraining all intercourse betwixt the United States and the West Indies, except in British shipping, made its appearance.

This measure was in every respect impolitic and unwise, as it was natural to imagine that it would make unfavorable impressions in regard to the views of Great Britain, that would remain long, and affect

fect deeply; and would have a tendency to convince the United States that the same system of infatuated councils, that severed the two countries asunder, still had an ascendancy in the British Cabinet, and was likely to continue an insuperable barrier to a free and unrestrained connection.

Much about the same time Lord Sheffield published a pamphlet, which was intended to justify the prudent precaution of such measures, as essentially necessary to the future wealth and power of Great Britain; it is said to have had a very serious effect on the minds of the people in England, the majority of whom, as in all countries, are more prone to receive the opinions of others, than be at the trouble of furnishing arguments for themselves.

However,

However, it will not be difficult to prove, that his reasoning is extremely flimsy and fallacious; entirely remote from the principles of commercial legislation, and supported on a system of acknowledged error.

Previous to entering on a refutation of his doctrine, it will be necessary to premise some few reflections, on the advantages that the West India Islands will derive, from being indulged in an intercourse with the United States, from which the adoption of Lord Sheffield's system would entirely exclude them.

The soil, the climate, and consequently the productions of the United States, are so various, that they can furnish almost every article that the wants and conveniences of the islands can require; and
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from circumstances of local situation, can supply them more abundantly, more expeditiously on better terms, and less subject to contingencies, than they can be procured from Europe; insomuch, that the West India Planters have always regarded a commercial connection with the United States as essential to the well-being and improvement of the islands, and have deprecated the loss of it, as a most fatal blow to their flourishing existence.

The articles which the Colonist indispensably stands in need of, are flour, biscuit, Indian corn, rice, beans, peas, potatoes, salt beef, pork, cheese, butter, beer, cod and other kinds of salt fish, whale oil, candles, tallow, soap, tobacco, naval stores, horses, poultry, live cattle, bar iron, building wood of all kinds, frames of houses, masts, spars, hoghead

hogthead staves, heading, shingles, plank both pine and oak, &c.

The United States can, not only abundantly, and at all times, supply these articles, but can furnish them on far more moderate terms, than they can be imported from Europe.

Experience has proved, that no food is so cheap and nourishing to the slaves as Indian corn, of which there must necessarily be a regular and frequent supply, as it will not keep but a short time, exposed to the extreme warmth of the climate. Small vessels are generally employed in furnishing these supplies, as well as live stock and other articles of provisions, which could not afford to navigate with cargoes of such little value,

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if it was not for the quickness of the voyage, and the certainty of a return freight of West India produce. These are not objects of sufficient importance for European vessels ; for large quantities would frequently overstock the market, and consequently be exposed to perish in the hands of the importer.

But there are particular times when the dependance of the West Indies on the United States, is more pointedly observable. After a hurricane, that awful and tremendous convulsion of nature, that so frequently happens in the tropical climates, that levels with the ground all the buildings and improvements of a plantation, destroys the provisions, and exhibits throughout the whole country, the wildest marks of ruin and devastation :

Where

Where is the affrighted planter to look for succour and assistance? How is he to repair his losses, promptly and effectually?

He must give himself up to despair, if his only reliance is on European supplies; but he feels a consolation when he considers his vicinity to America, which, though but a foster mother, acting like a natural parent, flies to his relief.

After these terrible calamities, which have threatened all the miseries of famine, he has often found, from experience, that she has poured in such abundance, as to have reduced the prices of provisions, much lower than they even were previous to his misfortunes.

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The advantages which this commerce presents are founded on the broad basis of reciprocal interests, and a mutual exchange of necessary commodities.

The United States, in return for the supplies they furnish the islands, will receive their productions, several of which, as rum and molasses, may be called the excrescencies of their exports, and without recourse to American consumption, would be in very feeble demand for the European market.

But should no encouragement be given to the planter, to aid the natural vigor of the soil, by the facility with which he may procure his provisions; and should the islands be deprived of the advantages which their local situation affords, by
 having

having the channel through which their supplies are to be procured, stopped up, or confined in too narrow bounds, they will not only individually suffer, by being often exposed to a calamitous scarcity; but the Mother Country must finally be sensible of the pernicious effects of such restrictions. For the body politic, like the human body, has a sense of feeling, in its remotest extremities. Nothing suffers singly by itself—there “is a consent of parts in the system of both, and the partial evil grows into universal mischief.” For in an exact ratio, with the rate of provisions, and other necessaries of life, will the demand for labor keep pace, and the price of West India produce, and its relative quantity, will rise or fall by these proportions. The planter consequently cannot afford his productions so low, as to
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be placed in competition with the French at a foreign market, except he procures his necessaries on the best of terms.

On the contrary, should the Colonies flourish under a State of ease and plenty, the Mother Country will be proportionably benefited; for it is an invariable rule in commercial polity, that riches always centre in the Metropolis; their diffusive influence may be compared to the circulation of the blood, which is dispersed over the whole system, but always returns back to the heart, the seat of life, and is only sent back by new pulsations.

Should therefore this monopolizing spirit, which is a mockery on the industry of a country, give way to more liberal ideas, the active stimulus of the planter will no longer

longer be depressed. By being furnished with necessaries on more moderate and easy terms, he will employ less of his revenue, to defray the expences of his estate; he will consequently have a residue left to appropriate to the extension of his settlements, clearing and breaking up new grounds, which when brought into culture, will furnish additional quantities of produce, to supply the increasing demand.

In the course of attaining these profits to the planter, the State will greatly benefit, in an increase of her revenues, by the duties laid on the surplus quantity of produce ; by the employment of a more extensive commerce and navigation, which must keep pace with the improving condition of her islands; and by fixing the
ballance

ballance of trade in her favor, in proportion to the augmentation of her exports.

Another advantage of conspicuous character offers itself ; which is, the increasing consumption of manufactures, which improving establishments naturally occasion ; and an increase of manufactures, is always accompanied by a proportional increase of population.

Moulded by habit to a particular mode of thinking in regard to the commercial legislation of the islands, I know it will be difficult, and will require every effort of sound reasoning, to break through the system of prohibitory laws, established by the British Government. But, when an increase of population and of revenue, progressive opulence and strength, are to be
derived

derived from the effects of abandoning this jealous self-obstructing policy ; it is to be expected, that the spirit of such contracted establishments will not be inveterate, and on mature consideration, will no longer be adhered to.

But it is asserted by Lord Sheffield, that regular supplies of provisions and necessities may, with proper encouragement, be obtained from the remainder of the British Colonies on the continent.

These visionary suggestions are almost too ludicrous to be combated, and seem intended as a political artifice, to blind the eyes of the too credulous people, and deceive them into a belief, that their remaining territories in America are of considerable value.

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It is well known, that the intenseness of the climate of Canada, with the difficulty of its navigation, will scarcely admit of more than one voyage in the year to the West Indies, which require a regular and continued supply of provisions.

As for the inhospitable regions of Nova Scotia, it will be matter of wonder, and a solace to humanity, if by the unceasing industry of its inhabitants, it will be able to produce a sufficiency, for their sustenance and support.

The United States must therefore continue to be, what they always have been, the granary of the British West Indies; and if direct importations into them are not admitted of, recourse will be had to indirect supplies, through the medium of
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the neutral islands. All the additional expence of this circuitous route, incurred for charges of double insurance, freight, commission, &c. will fall on the Colonist, as the consumer, without very materially injuring the American merchant, who will naturally insure to himself a saving profit on his exports.

Besides, the British Government must establish a number of guarda costas, well armed and appointed, to prevent the clandestine trade that will immediately commence betwixt the United States and their islands. A trade, that will find a support and protection, in every planter of the country, whose interest will be so immediately connected with its encouragement, will not easily be suppressed.

Even under the vigorous authority of military government in the French West Indies, not all the weight of power, exerted for the purpose, could formerly prevent this species of traffic ; much less can it be expected to succeed, where the reins of government are relatively so relaxed, as in the hands of the British Governors.

Besides, Great Britain has learned, by fatal dear-bought experience, impressed in such strong characters, as not to be soon and easily effaced, that "the true art of governing is not to govern too much ;" and how difficult it is to rule a people by laws, that it is their interest to resist, and render nugatory.

But

But to counteract the force of the foregoing observations, it is asserted by Lord Sheffield, and what is much more strange, that people are so infatuated as to believe, that notwithstanding the absolute prohibition on the part of Great Britain, of admission of American vessels into her islands, still that the United States will open their ports to British shipping, and freely indulge them with the liberty of carrying off their produce.

But he must have a poor opinion of the force of his own arguments, which he has so abundantly furnished to Great Britain, in favour of this selfish system of monopolizing the carrying trade, if he does not believe, that they will operate so effectually on the minds of the Americans, as to induce them, deprived of an equalization

zation of privilege, to adopt the same plan; admitting that their sagacious clear-sighted politicians had not already discovered them.

His premises therefore are not admissible—the idea they convey is an insult on common sense.

I expected, that in forming an estimate of the American character, the English had been fully persuaded, from a view of the progress of their political affairs, that they were conducted by a people who seldom have so widely wandered from their interests.

Habituated to the resistance of every oppressive measure, more vigilant over their national concerns, more intent on
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connecting the science of politics, with the elements of commerce, as forming the most important object of the statesman's attention—than perhaps any other nation existing, is it to be expected, they will acquiesce in a system, so derogatory to the honor, degrading to the spirit, and injurious to the interests of a great people?

A moment's reflection must convince every dispassionate enquirer, that our legislators are better guardians of the public concerns, than to submit to so pernicious an intercourse; especially, when it is considered, that they are selected from those, who are the best versed in the interests of the States, as relative to those of other commercial powers, and who will embrace every advantage that nature has
given,

given, or art can procure, to the improvement thereof.

He may continue to cherish the delusive idea, but I will tell him in prophetic language, what will be the consequence.

The States, from a sense of common danger, and common interest, will more closely unite together, and form one general system of exclusive navigation, in regard to Great Britain, established on clear, equal and determinate principles of commercial retaliation, which will rapidly pervade the whole Union. Already has a generous competition began to take place, betwixt them, which shall most cheerfully adopt, and carry into effect, those wise and salutary measures, recommended by the grand council of the country, in order to make
their

their fœderal union respectable, and the United States, as prosperous in Peace, as they have been glorious in War.

I acknowledge, that such public spirited arrangements will, for a time, expose some of the States, to temporary inconvenience and distress; but after all the sacrifices they have already made, will it be surprising that they should exert this self-denying virtue; especially, as it will eventually become one of the greatest sources of their future wealth and importance.

Such prohibitions, therefore, on the part of Great Britain, will operate like a charm throughout the country; they will act like a spur on the industry of the inhabitants, and compel them to turn

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their attention more immediately to the construction of ships, and the increase of their seamen. The eastern and middle States, which from circumstances of local situation and character, are more peculiarly calculated for these purposes, will, by vigorous exertion, by great and increasing encouragement, in a short time, be enabled to furnish a sufficient supply. Many of their trading inhabitants will be induced to reside in, and become citizens of the southern States, and form establishments therein, in order to devote themselves to the business of furnishing the necessary shipping, for the transportation of their bulky produce.

Such circumstances, fortunately combining in favor of the general interest of the
republic

republic, will operate as a bond of union amongst them, by occasioning their respective citizens to continue to mix freely, and intimately together.

And by making them mutually dependent on each other for reciprocal services, will divest them of local attachments, and will irresistibly impel them to become friends, to the rights and interests of confederated America. For as the propagation of mankind depends on the intercourse of persons of different sexes, so do political connections thrive only betwixt such countries, as furnish different materials for their mutual exchange, and who soon become, from a sense of each others wants, mutually endeared to each other. Yet this shrewd politician infers, that the States will oppose each other, because their staples and their cli-

mate are different—forgetting the truth of that political maxim, that interest unites, from the same cause that it divides.

Therefore this selfish arrangement which appears to predominate in the British Cabinet, and which is supposed to be an emanation from the same ill-fated star, which in your political system has been so long looked up to as your *polar* direction, will eventually become a great advantage to the United States ; for I am well convinced, that they never will arrive to any eminence as a naval power, until their inhabitants are reduced to the necessity of being the exclusive carriers of their own productions, thereby encouraging mercantile navigation, so as to make it become a nursery of seamen. I say forced, for the assertion of Lord Sheffield, that our vessels

fels navigate cheaper than those of Great Britain, is not founded on fact ; for when their speedy decay, comparatively with those of the British, with the scarcity of seamen, the much higher price of wages, and the necessity of importing most of the building materials from Europe, are taken into consideration, it will clearly be inferred, that the latter can afford their freights, at a much easier rate.

But should the United States be compelled to adopt a navigation act, the prospect will then change, the demands for seamen will greatly increase, their wages will be encouraging, and it will not be possible to prevent their passing into the American service; for this class of people, as wavering and inconstant as the element that wafts them, are attached to change
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of climate, and are easily allured by the prospect of greater wages, or kinder treatment.

Under the influence of the above causes it must be clearly evident, that the fears of our competition in the carrying trade of the West Indies, are entirely groundless. Besides, it is not probable that the Americans will seek in foreign countries for freights, when they have not perhaps above one fourth part of the necessary shipping to supply their own demands, for transporting their produce to market: How absurd and contradictory then are Lord Sheffield's apprehensions! for it is, from a presumption of their scarcity of shipping, that he affirms that the Americans will not refuse their produce to the offers of British vessels; he
acknow-

acknowledges likewise, that the French undersell the British sugars at foreign markets ; there can consequently be but little danger of the Americans being desirous of carrying them to foreign ports ; for where will be the inducement ?

In arguing against this selfish contracted system, founded on extreme cupidity, and in favour of a free unrestrained commerce betwixt the two countries, I have no view of consulting the advantages of the United States, to the exclusion of those of Great Britain.

I know it would be folly to expect that she would make sacrifices of her interests, to accommodate the views of the Americans.

But

But it so happens, that she cannot favor the United States with an indulgence, for which they are not able to furnish more than a reciprocal benefit.

It is expedient however to examine still more fully, what the grand leading argument that Lord Sheffield adduces in favour of the necessity of totally excluding them from a participation in the British West India trade, amounts to. He is fearful that they will thereby become the carriers of the produce of the islands to the place of its consumption, which will create an interference of foreign vessels, thereby lessening the number of seamen, and consequently the naval force of the country.

But, if in addition to all that I have already said, I answer, that in return for
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this accommodation which he may call indulgent, but which I have clearly evinced to be the interest of Great Britain, consulting the welfare of her islands, to grant.

I say, if in return for this accommodation, her subjects may be admitted to a free ingress and egress to and from the ports of the United States ;—What reply will the advocates for this system make ?—What will become of Lord Sheffield's reasoning, when weighed in the scale of comparative proportion ?—I only wish them to comprehend the magnitude of the advantage. Men of weak or limited understandings, will be incapable of extending their ideas, so as to embrace the vast field it opens to an enlightened mind.

In the first place, they will not assuredly deny, that the productions of the United States, to the transportation of which, from

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the proposed arrangement, they are freely to be admitted, will furnish twice the quantity of bulky materials, that the exports of the West Indies do, and will consequently employ twice the quantity of shipping.

—To stamp conviction in regard to the truth of this assertion, let them take a view of the rice, indigo, and lumber of Georgia and South Carolina ;—the naval stores, lumber, and tobacco of North Carolina ;—the tobacco, wheat, Indian corn, &c. of Virginia and Maryland ;—the flour, lumber, corn, and various provisions of Pennsylvania, Delaware, Jersey, and New York ;—the fish, lumber, live stock, &c. of the New England States.

Admit this fact, to be ascertained with satisfactory precision, will it not be confessed, that an arrangement, by which both countries are freely admitted to a participation

pation of each other's trade, will be highly advantageous to Great Britain.

This is a position, as clear as any mathematical axiom.—Besides, the advantages of Great Britain may be deemed increasing, as the exportation of the bulky produce of the United States, (in which her vessels will be employed) will augment, in proportion to the population of the country;—a population, that will probably be productive beyond all examples of former ages, —multiplying like the seeds of the harvest.

Whereas, on her part, there is but little room for extension of improvement ;—on this point her most sanguine friends would compound, for her being fixed and stationary.

But Lord Sheffield argues, that it would be folly to grant the Americans any particular privileges and concessions, as the

treaties with France, and the United Provinces, in direct terms forbid the British being put on a better footing than the inhabitants of those countries.

The faculties of this writer must be strangely perverted,—or his design must evidently be to delude the public mind, by giving so false a construction to this part of the treaties.

Can it be imagined, on the principles of common sense, that, if the French and Dutch exclude the Americans from a share of their West India trade, the United States will grant to the inhabitants of those countries, the same free admission into their ports, as to those of Great Britain, who may permit an unrestrained participation in their commerce? In every contract, there is a *quid pro quo*,—openly expressed, or tacitly implied;—and it is not to be presumed, that
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the most favoured nation can require a benefit, without granting a reciprocal return ;—it is contrary to the avowed policy of nations, which, it is well understood, is founded on the broad basis of interest and convenience.

The same reasons will tend to frustrate the hopes of Russia, who cannot, like the United States, give an equitable equivalent to Great Britain, in return for such great concessions.

France has hitherto, invariably, by her own internal resources, supplied her islands abundantly, with many of the necessaries they stand in need of, and is still in a capacity to do the same.

With respect to other articles, (the produce of the United States,) that do not interfere with her own exports, she has given free admission

admission to them all into her West India possessions;—and in order to gain the advantages of the rum trade, which the British hitherto have exclusively proposed, she has ceded particular districts in her islands, for the accommodation of the Americans, who may chuse to erect distilleries thereon, which, for their great encouragement, are to be exempt from taxes, for a certain number of years. —The consummate policy of her councils was never more eminently displayed, than in this measure*.

The astonished planter, in viewing the respective arrangements of the two countries, will wonder where the Genius of Britain, so famed for her commercial knowledge, has retired.

* See Proclamation of the General of Martinico, published in the Public Advertiser.

After

After having already made it appear that it is the interest of Great Britain (independent of all other considerations) to adopt the plan of an open communication between the islands and the United States, and that it is in the power of the latter to grant more than they receive;—I will now have recourse to an argument, that perhaps will have a salutary effect on those, who are the most difficult to be persuaded;—I mean, the relative situation of the two countries, which makes it the interest of Great Britain, more than that of any other European power, to be pointedly connected with the American States.

Let a moment's attention be paid to this subject, and let the inference be fairly and dispassionately drawn.

Great Britain, by the superior skill and industry of her inhabitants, and some adventitious

ventitious circumstances, has carried many of her manufactures to a degree of perfection and cheapness, which no other country in Europe has arrived at.

Considering the inferior state of her population, compared with some of her rival nations, and the very limited extent of her territory, it must be confessed, that a considerable part of her revenues, to support the immense load of debt she has incurred, must be drawn from this source--from the industry of her people.

The United States at present offer three millions of inhabitants, rapidly increasing in numbers, all of whom consume more or less of British manufactures,—the productions of art and industry;—in return for which, they give the raw materials,—the produce of agriculture, in their native state.

How

How infatuated must the councils of your country be, which could tend but for a moment, to disturb so beneficial an intercourse; or suspend the sweets of so lucrative a commerce!

The United States have as yet laid no impositions on the importation of British manufactures, that can have any tendency to restrain the consumption of them;— and many reasons of conspicuous weight and importance continually offer, in favour of establishing such duties;— for by operating as a sumptuary law, such a measure would be of considerable service to a young country, by repressing the desire of foreign luxuries, which have already been poured into America, in such abundance, that the States begin to suffer, from not having sufficient produce to remit in payment;— which turns the balance of

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trade

trade greatly against them.—Besides, such restrictions wisely imposed, tend to stimulate and encourage a spirit of industry amongst the people, to aim at similar improvements.

But should the impolitic conduct of Great Britain precipitate the adoption of this measure by the respective States, where are her growing resources to counteract the effects of this failure of internal industry?—for it is universally agreed, that no country is more dependent on foreign demand, for the superfluous produce of art and industry;—and that the luxury and extravagance of her inhabitants, have already advanced to the ultimate point of abuse, and cannot be so increased, as to augment the home consumption, in proportion to the decrease that will take place on a diminution of foreign trade.

What

What then will become of all those useful hands, that were employed in supplying the great demand ?

Recollect the cries of suffering thousands, at the time of the non-importation agreement ;—these people, in their own defence, will emigrate to America.

Such a system of conduct persevered in, will operate in favour of the United States, as effectually, as the revocation of the edict of Nantes did in behalf of the protestant countries of Europe ;—by holding up America, as the most desirable refuge for the property, arts, and manufactures of Great Britain to retire to ;—a country, where civil and religious liberty are upheld in all their purity,—where, by the exertion of a few years of honest industry, an emigrant is morally sure, of being fur-

nished with the means of becoming an independent freeholder ;—a country, that has laid no impolitic restraints on naturalization ;—whose yoke is easy, and whose burthen's light ; and which indulgently holds out its arms for the reception of the weary and heavy laden of all nations ;—and which, notwithstanding the attempts of Great Britain to enslave it, would generously offer an asylum for her persecuted sons, who, impressed with a sense of gratitude, “ may blush to think their fathers were “ its foes.”

But Lord Sheffield exultingly advances, that the Americans cannot forego the British manufactures ;—and that so far from the necessity of courting their custom, not all the interdicts of Congress, and of the several States, during the war, could prevent their consumption.

To

To deduce important inferences, from such faulty premises, would be "leaning on a broken reed." There may be at present some partiality in the States, for British manufactures ;—yet this predilection arises from cradle prejudices, and has greatly decreased during the war ;—and it would be unwise in Great Britain to place any reliance on a continuation of it :—for the manufactures of other countries, if equally good, and afforded cheaper, will, by a continued competition, be eventually preferred ; especially, as there will be a constant succession of emigrants from different parts of Europe, who have no decided preference in favour of the fashion or quality of British manufactures, and who, by mixing with the mass of the people, will gradually effect a change in their taste.—Already do the Americans begin to complain, that the British manufactures are
 slighted,

slighted, and inferior in quality to their usual standard ;—and it is well known, that many of the coarse kinds of stuffs, made at Norwich, Coventry, Spitalfields, and other factories, are shamefully deficient in length, whilst the Dutch, Flemish, and French, usually give a generous surplus in their measures.

But if the assertions of Lord Sheffield were founded on truth, what should be the conduct of Great Britain ?

Surely no circumstance can be more favourable to the aggrandizing a nation of industry, than the possession of a foreign trade with a country, which does not supply its own wants, and in which, the consumers of manufactures, that she furnishes, are continually increasing.

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Surrounded by rival nations, whose interests are opposed to hers, does she consider the duties that arise out of such a connection? They should prompt her to facilitate, by every method in her power, the means of making remittances, in return for the manufactures she furnished;---not by prohibiting the sale of American vessels which are sent to England for the payment of British debts;---by opening her ports for the importation of American produce free of duty;---not by laying such heavy impositions thereon, as to oblige the merchant to seek a more friendly market;---and by cultivating an intercourse, pointedly intimate, with that country;---(for this is the vernal season, when the seeds of future connection and intimacy with America are to be sown and cultivated;)--not by showing evident marks of pleasure
and

and satisfaction at every fabricated account of the distresses of America.

It would be unnecessary to follow Lord Sheffield through the tedious detail of articles that he has enumerated, as constituting the wants of the Americans, the greatest part of which, he asserts, they must absolutely procure from England ;—— the fallacy of this account can only be discovered by a person who is acquainted with the nature of the American trade, and the relative quality and price of foreign manufactures.

To oppose assertion to assertion, would not be sufficient to operate conviction on the public mind ;——but surely, one who can seriously place the articles of silk, laces, and salt, amongst the number of those, which Great Britain can enter into competition

tition with other countries, in supplying America with, must either be very ignorant of his subject, or extremely partial to his own country.

On a fair and candid consideration of the foregoing reflections, I think you will be persuaded, that the beautiful prospect that Lord Sheffield has painted to the eyes of his enraptured countrymen, of the increasing consequence of Great Britain, from his pleasing Arcadian plans, will, without great care taken to prevent it, and by pursuing a system diametrically opposite to what he has formed, disappear, like the dancing vision of a misty evening.

He reasons, as if the trade of America must irresistibly be confined to its former channel; whereas I can assure him, that, freed from the controul of your Navigation Act, and all the fetters of commercial restraint,

straint, it will expand itself, as far as seas can carry, or winds can waft it.

He forgets the energy of this young Country, that he is devoting to such humiliating restrictions; — he forgets, that it exhibited, whilst in its cradle, such marks of firmness and vigor of constitution, as, like young Hercules, to crush the serpent, that wantonly attacked it.

He does not recollect, that it is in the power of the United States (if provoked to it) to have recourse to recrimination and mutually ill offices, and to establish restrictions similar to those Great Britain may impose, which will be relatively far more prejudicial to her trade and commerce.

An impartial dispassionate Englishman,
fully weighing the reasons alledged against
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the adoption of Lord Sheffield's restraining system, and cordially attached to the interests of Great Britain, will deprecate the fatal measure.

An American, in the same temper of mind, looking forward to the future prosperity and power of his country, and contemplating the tendency of this system towards strengthening the union of the States, and making it indissoluble, will not hesitate to acquiesce without a murmur, to the existence of these restraining regulations :—the only objections that can arise, will come from those, who, too attentive to temporary inconveniences, do not consider and contrast them, with the many advantages their country will eventually derive ;—who do not consider, that the more trade and intercourse the United States will have with Great Britain, the greater will be the im-
portation

portation of British manufactures, and the more it will tend to impoverish and weaken them, and in the same proportion, contribute to her aggrandizement and power.

Harley-Street, Cavendish-Square,
December 16th, 1783.

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